

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 21, 2001 has been carefully reviewed. Claims 1-25 are pending in this patent application. By this amendment, claims 1-16 and 19-25 have been canceled, and claims 26-51 have been added. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1-4, 9-12, and 17-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Yokoyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,857,776). Claims 1-4, 9-12, and 19-24 have been canceled. Claims 17-18 have been amended. A version with markings showing changes made to claims 17-18 is included herewith in the "Attachment". Reconsideration of claims 17-18 is respectfully requested.

Discussion Regarding Patentability of Claim 17

1. Claim 17

Claim 17, as amended, reads as follows:

17. A method of adding an additional instrument to a vehicle, comprising the steps of:
 - removing an original dashboard bezel from said vehicle so as to expose a bezel mounting space, said original dashboard bezel possessing no instrument mounts;
 - installing an instrument bezel in said bezel mounting space, said instrument bezel having (i) a body substantially conforming in dimension to said original dashboard bezel, and (ii) an instrument mount secured to said body, said instrument mount being adapted to retain said additional instrument; and
 - mounting said additional instrument in said instrument mount.

Applicant's invention of amended claim 17 facilitates the addition of after-market instruments to a vehicle. In particular, claim 17 recites the steps of "removing an original dashboard bezel from said vehicle so as to expose a bezel mounting space, said original dashboard bezel possessing no instrument mounts", and "installing an instrument bezel in said bezel mounting space, said instrument bezel having (i) a body ... , and (ii) an instrument mount secured to said body,

In contrast, Yokoyama discloses an instrument panel 1 having a meter unit 20 mounted thereon. (See Yokoyama at column 3, lines 29-32, and FIGS. 3 and 4.) The meter unit 20 includes a meter body 21. (See Yokoyama at column 4, lines 49-50.) Yokoyama does not disclose removing an original dashboard bezel and replacing it with a replacement dashboard bezel, much less, removing and replacing dashboard bezels possessing the particular features recited in amended claim 17.

Note that if Yokoyama's meter body 21 is what is being equated with a "bezel" of Applicant's amended claim 17, Yokoyama never discloses replacing such "meter body" with another "meter body". Further, even assuming for the sake of argument that it did, Yokoyama clearly does not teach an original meter body having no instrument mounts, and a replacement meter body having an instrument mount. Since Yokoyama does not disclose each and every element of Applicant's amended claim 17, Yokoyama does not anticipate amended claim 17.

Discussion Regarding Patentability of Claim 18

Claim 18 depends directly from claim 17. As a result, claim 18 is allowable for, at least, the reasons hereinbefore discussed with regard to claim 18.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 5-8, 13-16, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Yokoyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,857,776) in view of Sano et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,324,203). Claims 5-8, 13-16, and 25 have been canceled.

Newly Added Claims 26-51

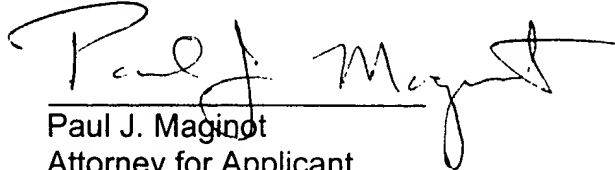
Claims 26-51 have been added. Such claims recite novel and nonobvious limitations. Accordingly, claims 26-51 are believed to be allowable over the prior art.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments remarks, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Action to that end is hereby solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

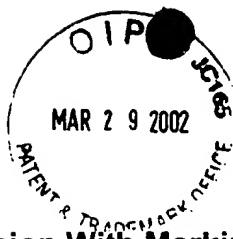
MAGINOT, MOORE & BOWMAN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul J. Maginot", is written over a horizontal line.

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Attachment

Version With Markings to Show Changes Made to Claims

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In the Claims

Please amend claims 17-18 as follows:

17. (Amended) A method of adding an additional instrument to a vehicle, comprising the steps of:

removing an original dashboard bezel from said vehicle so as to expose a bezel mounting space, said original dashboard bezel possessing no instrument mounts; [and]

installing an instrument bezel in said bezel mounting space, said instrument bezel having (i) a body substantially conforming in dimension to said original dashboard bezel, and (ii) an instrument mount secured to said body, said instrument mount being adapted to retain said additional instrument; and mounting said additional instrument in said instrument mount.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 17, [further comprising positioning said additional instrument in said instrument mount of said instrument bezel,] wherein said [positioning] mounting step is performed prior to said installing step.